

12 January 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion of "Track Record" Study with
Commander Lionel Olmer of PFIAB Staff

1. I discussed plans for the "track record" study with Commander Olmer for close to two hours today in his office. He made clear that he could not accept our invitation to participate in the study and did not wish to be in the position of approving the draft in advance. He said, however, that if we thought it useful he would be happy to come out to Langley and have a look at it. In any event, he had a number of useful comments and suggestions for us, and will probably have some more following the meeting of PFIAB scheduled for Friday. He plans to report briefly on the project at that time.

2. Briefly, I told Olmer the following:

- Three of us are now working on the project (myself, of DDS&T).
- We hope to have our basic research done this week, will devote next week to drafting the report proper, and on this basis would have another week for review and coordination before our target date of 30 January. (I also said that we did not plan any community coordination, since the study represented an effort to provide a detached look at the problem, not an official view.)
- Since we felt it best to present the facts first and any general conclusions later, the plan was to march briskly down the list of subjects given in the Stoertz memo to Galvin, briefly matching (and commenting on) the estimative record against Soviet performance in each case, then following with a discussion of any general tendencies or trends detected.
- We may go more deeply into some topics than the outcome indicates if what we turn up appears to warrant it. We are also considering brief treatments of two topics on which the estimative conclusions haven't changed greatly but which have been getting increasing intelligence

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attention -- ASW and Civil (Passive) Defense.

- In general, we were trying to look at the estimates in terms of how well they: (a) identified and evaluated activities already under way, (b) dealt with the uncertainties of assessing future force levels and system capabilities and (c) provided what could be generally accepted as a reasonable and persuasive assessment of likely Soviet motivations, goals, and expectations.

3. Olmer had no major suggestions to make regarding substance but did stress throughout the desirability of presenting our material so that PFIAB members would find it easy to absorb, and with the facts speaking for themselves to the extent possible. He pointed out the usefulness of items like an executive summary and a glossary of technical terms. He particularly urged that we be prepared to make an oral presentation of the study at PFIAB's 7 February meeting, with the written report being available for later perusal by any board members interested. He said that Colby, if still around, would probably be most interested in having such a presentation. He specifically suggested a briefing of about 90 minutes (including about 30 for questions) with enough key people on hand to answer specific questions on past (or present) estimates on such matters as ICBM accuracy. (By this, I would take to mean people like Ev Hineman, Zeke Zellmer and Sayre Stevens who are familiar with major episodes of the past.)

4. For the rest, Olmer was chiefly concerned that we be aware of the kind of questions that people like Foster were raising and of the uneasiness and uncertainty of many of the others, not only over how well or poorly the estimates had been but also over the strengths and limitations on the evidence available. He noted, inter alia, Foster's expressed disbelief in the 1975 assertion (p. 9, Key Judgments) that the Soviets "would be uncertain about the outcome of an attack on US Minuteman silos and would probably expect a considerable number to survive." Incidentally, Olmer felt that Galvin would be a particularly good person to be working with since he was energetic, impartial, and non-technical-minded, though heading a technical firm.

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cc: Carver
Stoertz

(DDS&T)

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